

Keeping the History from Oblivion :
Physicality and Repetition in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*

Faculty of Law, Department of Politics

Yoshikatsu TSUJI

Introduction

On 15th September in 2001, Ian McEwan commented on 9/11 in the article of *The Guardian*, entitled "Only Love and Then Oblivion: Love Was All They Had to Set against Their Murderers":

If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality.

In this article, McEwan insists on the significance of sympathy to imagine oneself "into the thought and feeling of" the other. Referring to the act of narrating in conversation with David Lynn, he rephrases it as "mapping out of other minds and the invitation to the reader to step into those other minds" (51). Some critics paraphrase it in terms of "penetration" and McEwan once remarked "penetration into other consciousness" in an article, which is not available now.¹

His use of "penetration" for sympathy is worth attention in the sense that this word frequently means the sexual intercourse.

In this respect, three of McEwan's works, published before and after 9/11, are noteworthy. Those works describe penetrations into others in a literal sense, and it is significant that all penetrations are not accomplished. These three works are *Atonement* (2001), *Saturday* (2005), and *On Chesil Beach* (2007).²

The remarkable point of the motif of penetration is that it is represented as the sexual penetration between men and women who belong to different classes: Robbie Turner and Cecilia Tallis in *Atonement*, Baxter and Daisy Perowne in *Saturday*, and Edward Mayhew and Florence Ponting in *On Chesil Beach*. Men's status is always lower than women's. Robbie is a son of a servant for the Tallises. Baxter is a street gangster, while Daisy is an Oxford-educated poet. Edward is a son of the headmaster of a primary school, while Florence is a gifted violinist, whose father is a prosperous businessman and whose mother is a lecturer in philosophy.

In relation to the recurrent motif of penetration, "beach" functions as the boundary between two spheres in all three works. In *Atonement*, one of the protagonists, Robbie, has bitter experience on the beach of Dunkirk and goes across the Channel. In *Saturday*, as will be referred to later, Matthew Arnold's well-known poem entitled "Dover Beach" plays an important role. As the title apparently shows, *On Chesil Beach* uses a seashore as the setting where its principal characters, Edward and

Florence, spend their wedding night. Thus, these three works foreground the boundary.

Considering McEwan's comment about 9/11, these three works can be regarded as attempts to search for the possibility of penetration into others by way of literature. However, they can also be regarded as a paradoxical depicting of the impossibility in that they describe failures of physical penetrations. The physicality is, of course, connected with the motif of sexual penetrations, and is opposite to the mental penetration, on which McEwan insists in his comment on 9/11.

Just before 9/11, McEwan's his ninth novel, *Atonement*, was published, and it took four more years for him to publish his next novel. Between these works, the Iraq war broke out. Thus his preoccupation with "the core of our humanity" is condensed into his tenth novel, *Saturday*, whose scene is set in London, where people are in the grip of anxious fear of attacks by terrorists. In *Saturday*, we can see the dynamics of penetration that occurs in the boundary between two opposite element, such as individual and society, humanities and science, reality and fiction, and so on.

Saturday is the story of Henry Perowne's one-day experience, and is narrated by an omniscient narrator in the third person, in the present tense. This day can be identified as 15th February 2003, for a huge demonstration that took place actually on the very day in London is described in the novel.

Henry Perowne is a neurosurgeon. This novel describes his off day, which includes a regular squash game with his colleague, an accidental encounter with a diseased thug, the family meeting to celebrate his daughter's publication of a collection of her poems entitled *My Saucy Bark*, and the intrusion into the party by gangsters.

Entering the mind of others—or penetrating the wall of the mind of other people—is a significant theme of *Saturday*. This can be seen not only in the story but also in the narrative structure. At the level of story, Perowne unconsciously tries to imagine what others think, throughout the novel. Narrating in the novel is the same act in this sense. While Perowne uses his medical knowledge to investigate others' minds, the narrator's literary description is carried out by entering Perowne's mind and by reporting what he is thinking. It is clear that Perowne's entering the mind of others and the narrator's "penetration" into the protagonist's mind constitute the oppositional relationship in *Saturday*. However, as mentioned above, the physicality is also significant factor.

Considering not only the mental but also the physical leads to bringing the hidden message of McEwan to light. The present paper aims to investigate the meaning of the physicality and the repetition, and it finally turns out to be the attempt to explore the role of the novel for the history that is on the verge of oblivion.

1. Physicality, Intertextuality, and the Wars

The physical is the core of the world for Perowne and it connects to his sense of value in literature:

They [*Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*] had the virtue, at least, of representing a recognizable physical reality, which could not be said for the so-called magical realist she [Daisy] opted to study in her final year. (67)

In this passage, there is also a denouncement for the magical realist, which is regarded as the opposition against the realist who represents “a recognizable physical reality” in the novels. Perowne describes the novels of magical realists as follows:

In more than one, heroes and heroines were born with or sprouted wings – a symbol, in Daisy’s term, of their liminality; naturally, learning to fly became a metaphor for bold aspiration. (67)

The motif of “wings” is regarded as the representative of magical realism here. Wings enable “heroes or heroines” to fly, namely, to be against the law of gravity.

Gravity in McEwan’s work is identical with the principle of reality. For instance, Peter, the protagonist in *The Daydreamer*

(1994), invents a kind of weightless environment simulator in a daydream, which is offered as a tale within the novel. As Peter Childs points out, it is noteworthy that this novel is constituted by seven interlinked stories of “out-of-body experience” (149). *Amsterdam* (1998) also has a little reference to the weightless environment simulator. It appears as the unrealized device in the novel. In both novels, the weightlessness is connected to the opposition of reality. On the contrary, in *Saturday*, the phrase “the iron weight of the actual” (168) confirms the connection between gravity and the principle of reality.

In relation to the wings, flying, and gravity, height is also an essential motif in McEwan’s works. From the early part of this novel, height is connected to the omniscient or the fantastic. Starting this novel with Perowne’s looking down on the square, McEwan sets the one-way relationship between the seer and the seen. It also appears in other McEwan’s works. For instance, in *Atonement*, the innocent Bryony on the first floor looks down on the exchange between her sister Cecilia and Robbie, who are in the garden, and mistakenly regards it as an assault upon Cecilia by Robbie. Bryony makes up the story based on the misunderstanding, which sends Robbie to jail. Also at the end of *Saturday*, Perowne stands beside the window and reflects upon his Saturday, while

[h]e feels himself turning on a giant wheel, like the Eye on

the south bank of the Thames, just about to arrive at the highest point – he’s poised on a hinge of perception, before the drop, and he can see ahead calmly. (272)

This relationship between the height and the act of seeing is thus presented both in the beginning and in the end of the novel.

Height in buildings forms a hierarchy in terms of the innocent. Lynn Wells suggests that “[t]he Perowne home is subtly organized to reflect certain structures of power, both personal and political”(120). Wells analyzes the three stories of the house, which are associated with each symbolic meaning: the upper story is associated with “Perowne’s class superiority and cultural imperialism”; the basement is connected with the space of “the traditionally feminine work”; and the first floor of the house is “the middle space where masculine and feminine principles converges as the conflict between the bourgeois family and the outsider takes place” (120). The Perowne home, however, consists of four stories in fact. Wells overlooks the third floor, where Perowne’s son, Theo, usually sleeps. The third floor of Perowne’s house should be regarded as an innocent sphere.

As to the theme of height, Masaaki Takeda, referring to *The Child in Time* (1987) and *Enduring Love* (1997), points out the structure that consists of the upper innocent world and of the lower substantial world. He argues that, therefore, the contrast “represents the harshness of the substantial world” and that the

fall as a motif in these novels “symbolically brings the end of an innocent world into the work” (15, translation mine). In this sense, Baxter’s tumbling down from the upper floor of Perowne’s house can be regarded as the embodiment of the fall motif in *Saturday*. Certainly, the intrusion of Baxter, described as an “excited child” (223), comes to an end by falling. Thus, in this novel, like Perowne’s thought about realism, physicality is represented as a reality.

As the physical act, a sinking body into the water foregrounds and highlights the boundaries in this novel. In the following episode with his mother, Lily, Perowne abhors to feel the boundary materially:

She [Lily] made him follow her into sinister green lakes and the grey North Sea before season. It was another element, she used to say, as if it were an explanation or an enticement. Another element was precisely what he objected to lowering his skinny freckled frame into. It was the division between the elements that hurt most. [...]
(37-38)

Led by Lily, who is expert at swimming, Perowne attempted to sink his body into the lake; however, his body withstands the boundaries.

As “another element” that is alien to Perowne, the

physicality of Baxter is an uncanny thing for him. For instance, Baxter's existence is described as follows:

All day long, the encounter on University Street has been in his [Perowne's] thoughts, like a sustained piano note. But he'd almost forgotten about Baxter, not the fact of his existence, of course, but the *agitated physical reality*, the sour nicotine tang, the tremulous right hand, the monkeyish air, heightened now by a woollen cap. (207, emphasis added)

Previous to this scene, in their first encounter, Perowne and Baxter experience the first physical touch, which seems to Perowne "a sharp ridge, a shock wave" and carries "with it not so much pain as an electric jolt of stupefaction" (92). It is noteworthy that the physical touch in this scene, Baxter's punch, is compared with a "kick" in terms of intimacy: "A kick is less intimate, less involving, than a punch, and one kick never quite seems enough" (93). Consequently, the intimacy of Baxter's punch is paradoxically expressed.

In the scene of Baxter's intrusion into Perowne's house, the physical touch between Perowne and Baxter can be regarded as suspended. There is no touch between them until the end of the scene of the intrusion: after leaving Baxter's crony, Perowne seizes Baxter's wrist with both hands, flings him down the stairs

in cooperation with Theo, and thinks the “[c]ontact at last” (227). Throughout this scene, Perowne continues to attempt to penetrate into Baxter’s thought. This, however, does not succeed.

In relation to the physicality of Baxter, generation is a significant theme, because of two notable motifs of Baxter, namely, his inherited Huntington disease and his undisclosed family name. The former would be brought to light definitely by comparison with Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), which is often referred to and known as an inter-text of *Saturday* by critics.³ The latter can be considered in the light of the sense of continuity between generations.

In comparison with Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, there are some prominent similarities and one noteworthy difference. The protagonists of *Mrs Dalloway* and *Saturday*—Clarissa Dalloway and Henry Perowne—belong to the middle-class; both of them travel around London; both novels depict the protagonists’ experience in a single day; and both protagonists’ counterparts, Baxter and Septimus Warren Smith, suffer from disease. However, concerning their diseases, the difference stands out. The difference of diseases from which Baxter and Septimus Warren Smith suffer is noteworthy: shell shock and Huntington disease respectively. The significant point is the difference of their backgrounds. On the one hand, shell shock is attributed to the experience of World War One; on the other hand, Huntington disease is attributed to a private and generational

cause. The former is caused by the war as a social and collective incident; the latter has nothing to do with the public and the collective. It is obvious that the difference of the causes of their diseases between *Mrs Dalloway* and *Saturday* is correspondent to the contrast between the social and the individual. This contrast puts stress on the fact that Baxter is alienated from the society.

Moreover, the contrast between the mental and the physical in the two works is also inscribed here. Each intrusion of the outsiders into the parties of *Mrs Dalloway* and in *Saturday* coincides with this contrast: Septimus Warren Smith penetrates into Clarissa's party *imaginatively* and Baxter invades Perowne's party *physically*. This difference foregrounds the connection between the Perowne and Baxter. As Sonoko Hirota points out, the relationship between Perowne and Baxter "continues to be governed by physical factors, which are entirely absent from the spiritual connection between Clarissa and Septimus" (71). Besides, in Perowne's thought, thinking Baxter and physicality are inseparable: "It may be the thought of him [Baxter] that makes Henry feel shaky, or the physical effects of tiredness" (272).

This difference suggests that Baxter has only his body and name. He does not have any collective, mental relationship. In addition to this, he does not have the past. Disregarding the past is represented as an inconspicuous but noteworthy motif: the lack of Baxter's family name. Baxter's undisclosed family name

is the other heritage from past generations depicted in this novel. In the scene of the fender bender, when Perowne and Baxter encounter for the first time, the conversation between them takes place as follows:

‘Henry Perowne.’

‘Baxter.’

‘Mr Baxter?’

‘Baxter.’ (87)

While Perowne gives his full name, Baxter appears to refuse to give his family name. As Robert Eaglestone points out, Baxter is “deprived of a first name” (76), and so are his cronies, Nigel and Nark. Furthermore, regarding “Baxter” as his true name is inappropriate. In this respect, the following conversation between Perowne and Baxter is suggestive:

‘Is your real name Baxter?’

‘That’s my business.’ (96)

This uncertainty functions as “an impenetrable barrier” both for Perowne and for the reader (Amiel-Houser 132). Therefore, the reader never knows his true name throughout the novel. This conversation indicates that Baxter rejects both the concept of generation and the generational bond by discarding his family

name, and that he lives as a street gangster with the name Baxter alone as his sole identity.

Moreover, throughout the novel, by referring to other literary works, McEwan foregrounds the significance of the name. In this novel, four works are implied or referred to: Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900), Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877), Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), and Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Perowne does not think highly of a novel, probably *Lord Jim*, on the ground that "seafaring, however morally fraught, doesn't much interest him" (6). Perowne also reads *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*; however, "he was unmoved" by genius "in the detail" (67) of the two works. Daisy reads *Jane Eyre* as a first novel at Grammaticus's insistence (133). It is suggestive that all of those works have person's name in their titles, and so is *Mrs Dalloway*,⁴ a precursor of *Saturday*. In addition to this list, the novel for the epigraph of *Saturday*, *Herzog* (1964), forms another intertextual relationship in this sense.

Another of *Saturday*'s related works leads to examining the physicality in this novel. The name Baxter recalls Baxter Dawes, who is a character of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913).⁵ In *Sons and Lovers*, Baxter Dawes appears as an opponent of the protagonist, Paul Morel, and their hostile exchanges of blows curiously promote their friendship.⁶ Given that *Sons and Lovers* is referred in *Saturday*, the episode in which Tony Blair mistakes Perowne for a painter in this novel can be taken to allude to Paul

Morel, the painter-protagonist in *Sons and Lovers*. It can be said that the episode alludes to the reader that Paul Morel is correspondent with Perowne in the oppositional relationship.

Like between Baxter Dawes and Paul Morel, the curious bond is born between Perowne and Baxter. After escaping from Baxter, Perowne regards Baxter with favour to some degree:

In fact, he [Perowne] wouldn't mind talking to him [Baxter]. His case is interesting, and the offer of help was sincere. (140)

Regardless of the fact that this feeling seems to come from Perowne's medical interest, the bond between them is certainly emphasized.

This curious bond functions as an irony for the Iraq war. As many critics regard Baxter as Saddam Hussein, the structure between the Western world and the non-Western world is set in *Saturday*. In this respect, Robert Eaglestone's pointing out that the Huntington disease in this novel can be regarded as an allusion to Samuel Huntington's *Crash of Civilizations* is suggestive (*The Contemporary Fiction*, 85). Eaglestone says that this allusion functions as the proleptic of crash of two different cultures, and it takes place in the form of physical touch. Furthermore, it can be connected to the last line of "Dover Beach": "Where ignorant armies clash by night." In this sense,

the irony, which arises from the oppositional, hostile relationship between Perowne and Baxter, is the fact that people can bear mutual understanding only through the violence. Thus, *Saturday* is the novel about human communication in the twenty-first century.

McEwan casts the same theme on the wars in the twentieth century. The situation in which the Iraq war is about to break out has connection to the wars in the last century by virtue of a wartime tune referred to in this novel, whose lyric Perowne hums to himself “*We’ll meet again, don’t know where, don’t know when*” (57): it is Vera Lynn’s “We’ll Meet Again” released in 1939. Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Perowne turns his thought towards “a middle-aged doctor standing at the window in his silk dressing gown” a hundred years ago and the looming shadows of the two world wars (276). Imagining this doctor, Perowne wonders “what was their body count, Hitler, Stalin, Mao? Fifty million, a hundred” (276)? By referring to the number of corpses, the relationship between the wars and the body is presented here. Therefore, McEwan’s insight into the physicality is intended to consider both the twentieth century and the twenty-first century.

2. Repetition, Allegory, and History

Not thinking highly of literature, Perowne is acquainted with music. When he is working in the operating theatre, he listens to classical music, “mostly piano works by Bach,” and “[i]n a really good mood he’ll go for the looser interpretation of Glenn Gould” (22). His opinion that the music is superior to literature appears as follows:

So far, Daisy’s reading lists have persuaded him that fiction is too humanly flawed, too sprawling and hit-and-miss to inspire uncomplicated wonder at the magnificence of human ingenuity, of the impossible dazzlingly achieved. Perhaps only music has such purity. (68)

Regardless of the fact that Daisy gives literary education to Perowne, this results in confirming the presence of blots in literature more and more. Thus, according to Perowne’s thinking, music has a kind of “purity,” and literature does not have it.

Perowne’s attitude to music should be understood by investigating what is common between two musical genres, classical music and the blues, which fascinate him and have something to do with his life. As Bach and Glenn Gould are referred to, classical music is the essence of his taste, and the

blues, with which his son, Theo, is gifted, is also referred to in this novel:

[I]s there a lifetime's satisfaction in twelve bars of three obvious chords? Perhaps it's one of those cases of a microcosm giving you the whole world. [...] When player and listener together know the route so well, the pleasure is in the deviation, the unexpected turn against the grain. [...] [A]bsorbing variation on an unchanging theme. (27)

The blues is characterized by its repetitive structure, named twelve bar blues, which consists of only three chords. A piece is ordinarily constructed by repeating the basic pattern of twelve bars. Under these features, as Perowne thinks, "the pleasure is in the deviation" within the repetition's pattern. Therefore, the performance of the blues necessarily includes the repetition.

The quotes above about classical music and the blues have the following parallel words: "looser interpretation," "deviation," and "variation." These words imply that the heart of these genres is the deviation from the original or the standard, and it is generated by repetition. In this sense, the frequent appearance of these two phrases, "turn/run around" and "a dozen times", is suggestive. These are used, for instance, in Perowne's denouncement for Henry James on the ground of his euphemistic description in comparison with William James:

He should look out what William James wrote on forgetting a word or name. [...] James had the knack of fixing on the surprising commonplace – and in Perowne’s humble view, wrote a better-honed prose than the fussy brother who would rather *run round a thing a dozen different ways* than call it by its name. (58, emphasis added)

Henry James’s way of describing resembles the repetitive structure of the blues. The placards which say “Not in My Name goes past a dozen times” (72) can be given as another example. These frequently appearing phrases shed light upon the presence of the repetitive actions or repetition itself in *Saturday*.

Two types of repetition are presented in the novel: the repetition in classical music and the repetition in the blues. The former is correspondent to the repetition related to the original; in other words, it is correspondent to representation. The latter is the repetition based on the difference. The repetition in classical music exists as an interpretation of the original. For instance, the performance of classical music is based on scores, which were ordinarily written by legendary composers and are treated as canons. It is usual but notable that the performance is always more or less different from the original. Therefore, in this type of repetition, the interpretations of the original by each

player are essential. On the one hand, the repetition in the blues bears little relation to the original score. In this genre, its repetitive structure functions as a limitation, and it can be stated that the pleasure of the blues arises from making variations, improvisations, or the “deviation” within the form as limitation. This pleasure arises from what Perowne regards as “a microcosm giving you the whole world” and “absorbing variation on an unchanging theme” (27).

In relation to these two types of repetition, these two scenes are significant: Theo’s live performance, which enthuses Perowne, and Daisy’s recitation of Mathew Arnold’s poem, “Dover Beach”, which moves Baxter. It is noteworthy that both scenes are concerned with Perowne’s two children,⁷ and both are correspondent to the two types of repetition. Moreover, the two types of repetition in music are foregrounded through the scene in which the protagonists are affected.

Theo’s live performance is regarded as a variation of the repetition in the blues. Affected by Theo’s performance, Perowne, a usually cool-headed man, “comes away from the wall where he’s been leaning, and walks into the middle of the dark auditorium, towards the great engine of sound” (171). Before being affected, “he discovers that the song is not in the usual pattern of a twelve-bar blues,” and he finds that “[t]here’s middle section with an unworldly melody that rises and falls in semitones” (171). The word “pattern” confirms that Theo’s performance is

correspondent to the repetition in the blues, and it is obvious that the deviation from the “pattern” or from its standard literally moves Perowne.

On the other hand, Daisy’s recitation can be regarded as the equivalent of the repetition in classical music. In the scene of Daisy’s recitation, the text of Mathew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” is correspondent to a score in classical music. In other words, the relation between Daisy and “Dover Beach” is identical with that between a player and a score in classical music. This is the very relation that the repetition in classical music postulates.

Neither the influence of the poetry itself nor the female attractiveness is not the true reason for the change of Baxter’s attitude. However, Daisy’s recitation actually thwarts Baxter’s violence. Robert Eaglestone mentions that the text of “Dover Beach” “had been learnt by rote by Daisy” (“The Age”, 364). Moreover, Rebecca Carpenter points out that “the feminist possibilities of such a scene are multiply undercut” (155). Carpenter finds out the male, coercive power in Daisy’s recitation: the words of the recitation are not Daisy’s but those written by one of “the great white men of the British literary canon”, and in fact she is forced to read “Dover Beach rather than her own poem.” “[H]er brilliant poet grandfather conceives the plan to pretending read one of her poems;” therefore, “Daisy is largely reduced to the role of a brave actress in a drama scripted for her by others” (155). However, this performative power of her

recitation should be noted. Daisy's recitation, which is similar to the repetition in classical music, makes Baxter realize the continuity of history. Stirred by Daisy's recitation, Baxter recalls "Folkstone," where he grew up (96). It is obvious that repetition in classical music and Baxter's recollection have the same temporal structure. He consciously recollects his birthplace and unconsciously feels the original, Mathew Arnold's "Dover Beach." The reason for the change of Baxter's attitude is attributed to his sensibility to the temporal distance from the original.

On the other hand, the repetition in the blues brings Perowne into the timeless condition, in which his mother Lily also lives. Experiencing Theo's performance, Perowne feels a kind of utopia:

There are these rare moments [...] when their [musicians'] expression becomes as easy and graceful as friendship or love. This is when they give us a glimpse of what we might be, of best selves, and of an impossible world in which you give everything you have to others, but lose nothing of yourself. (171)

Feeling this utopian moment, Perowne realizes what his mother Lily says: "you can go for a mile" (167). Before saying these words, Lily, for whom "[e]verything belongs in the present"

because of her dementia (164), says that “[o]ut here [nursing home] it only looks like a garden, Aunty, but it’s the countryside really” (167). In this respect, it is intriguing that the place of this nursing home is described as follows:

In the twenties and thirties, great tracts of agricultural land to the west of London disappeared before an onslaught of high-speed housing development. [...] Each near-identical house has an uneasy, provisional look, as if it knows how readily the land would revert to cereal crops and grazing. (158)

Considering this vision leads to regarding Lily intuiting the place in the past or the place in the future in the present tense. Therefore, it can be said that Perowne, realizing what Lily says, plunges into timeless conditions in a utopian moment.

The similarity between Perowne and Lily as an old woman appears inwardly in the form of movement. As mentioned above, the up-and-down, vertical movement is significant in McEwan’s works, however a unique point in *Saturday* entails a horizontal movement. A horizontal movement is described in the scene of a nursing home where Perowne’s mother Lily lives, and of Perowne’s vehicular travel in the city. In the nursing home, an elderly lady named Annie, who also lives in the care house, demonstrates the notable movement. Her movement is described

as follows:

She's shuffling unsupported towards him at speed. When she reaches the end of the third sitting room she'll turn back, and keep moving back and forwards all day until she's guided towards a meal, or bed. (159)

This repetitive shuttling movement is characteristic of a person who loses the sense of time and is losing his or her past memories. In this novel, the shuttling movement is attached to the loss of temporality and of memory. It is, therefore, concerned with Lily's remark quoted above: "you can go for a mile" (167).

The contrast between Baxter and Perowne in terms of temporality sheds light on that of each different movement. Considering the horizontal movement sheds light on Baxter's falling, vertical movement. This contrast between the horizontal and the vertical also appears in the contrast of illnesses in this novel. For it is also correspondent with this contrast between Huntington disease and flu, which is spread in the hospital where Perowne works. The former is vertical in the sense that it is inherited in terms of generation; the latter is horizontal in the sense that it is shared by contemporaries. Thus, the temporal contrast is described in multiple ways.

This timeless condition transfers into the lack of history: there is not any imprint of World War Two. Perowne and Lily

dismiss the fact that the wars demolished the cities. In the early part of the novel, the relation between the city and the wars is inscribed:

That particular façade is a reconstruction, a pastiche – wartime Fitzrovia took some hits from the Luftwaffe. [...]
(4)

In spite of this passage, the wars fall into oblivion in the timeless utopian condition. As mentioned in the former chapter of this paper, the wars in the last century are the object of this novel; moreover, at the same time, oblivion of them is also a significant theme.

Oblivion is connected to and considered with the truth in *Saturday* as follows:

[Q]uestions of misinterpretation are not often resolved. Nor do they remain pressingly unresolved. They simply fade. People don't remember clearly, or they die, or the questions die and new ones take their place. (156)

Suggesting the story of *Atonement* by referring to “misinterpretation” in this passage, McEwan appears to consider the problem of history in the sense that the truth could be misunderstood or ignored.

McEwan interconnects personal oblivion of old people and historical, collective oblivion of people today. His reference to oblivion in “Only Love and Then Oblivion” is noteworthy. Mentioning the women’s message from the World Trade Center to her husband, McEwan states:

She said it [I love you] over and again before the line went dead. And that is what they were all saying down their phones, from the hijacked planes and the burning towers. There is only love, and then oblivion. Love was all they had to set against the hatred of their murderers.

This oblivion here designates the disappearance of individuals’ experience in the sense that each individual’s experience is integrated into the nameless story about love. It is the very situation for which McEwan criticizes the terrorists. For this integration into the nameless and the terrorists’ ignorance of thought and feelings of the passenger have the same structure in the sense that both disregard the existence of each individual. In this respect, the recurrent motif of name in *Saturday* has more meaning. Thus, McEwan warns not only the loss of collective history but also that of individual history.

The experience of the twentieth century and that of the twenty-first century are the principal issues of this novel. It is clear that McEwan, from the beginning of this novel, writes

about the experience of the twentieth century, since his epigraph for this novel is quoted from Saul Bellow's novel, *Herzog*, and since McEwan mentions that Bellow's "novels are not simply set in the 20th century, they are about that century" ("Master of the Universe"). Quoting a passage from *Herzog* in *Saturday*, McEwan deals with the experience of the twenty-first century, of course, in the forms of the novel. The relation between the novels and temporality is described as follows:

Novels and movies, being restlessly modern, propel you forwards or backwards through time, through days, years or even generations. (129)

By way of this temporal maneuvering, the novel can depict both collective and individual history.

Given that the intertextuality in this novel can be interpreted as a mixture of the repetition in classical music and that in the blues, McEwan's exploring the role of the novels is clarified. The repetition in music functions as an allegory of the novel. The intertextuality with *Sons and Lovers* is close to the repetition in the classical music, which presupposes the existence of the original; the intertextuality with *Mrs Dalloway* is close to the repetition in the blues, which shares the common form and setting and makes variations in it. In order to foreground this allegory, the auditory is privileged in this novel

and its repetitiveness is emphasized. In this sense, the following scene of Perowne's operating on Baxter, in which a CD of Hewitt is played, is suggestive:

Well over an hour has passed, and Hewitt is already at the final Variation, the Quodlibet. [...] The last exultant chords fade away, a few seconds' silence, then the Aria returns, identical on the *page*, but changed by all the variations that have come before. [...] (254, emphasis added)

Interpreting the "page", which means a leaf of the score here, in the literal sense confirms the allegory set between music and the novel. Reading the novel changes the reader's sense of the history, while the other thing is identical. In *Saturday*, by using this allegory, McEwan explores the significance of feeling the history, and it is the very role of the novel that McEwan believes in the early part of the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

The present paper has examined the physicality and the repetition in Ian McEwan's *Saturday* in terms of the sense of history. The theme of physicality in this work is foregrounded by considering its inter-texts, namely, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. The difference between Baxter in *Saturday* and Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway* in terms of the cause of disease indicates the fact that Baxter is alienated from the society. The similarity between Baxter in *Saturday* and Baxter Dawes in *Sons and Lovers* sheds light on the curious fact that the adversarial characters promote friendship through physical contact. By juxtaposing the Iraq war with the wars of the twentieth century, McEwan offers the fact that people can bear mutual understanding only through violence. This insight into human communication and history has much to do with the theme of repetition in this novel. Repetition is foregrounded by music which affects both Baxter and Perowne. In this novel, music functions as the allegory of the novel. Two types of repetition are correspondent with two kinds of intertextuality. While the timeless utopian condition is described, McEwan explores the significance of feeling the history as the alternative to it. McEwan obviously deals with oblivion as one of the significant themes of *Saturday*; therefore, he warns not only the loss of collective history but also that of individual history.

McEwan demonstrates that the novel can depict both collective and individual history by way of temporal maneuvering examined in this paper.

Notes

1 Foe example, Arthur Bradley quotes it from the author interview in Random House Reader's Readers' Group Reading Guides and note that he accessed 5 December 2008 (24).

2 In his newer works, *Solar* (2010), this motif of failure of penetrations is varied into two things. One is protagonist's principle that, though he has much intercourse with women, he never impregnates them. He doesn't impregnate his wife, either. The other is his wounded penis, from which he suffers in the novel.

3 See, for example, Laura Marcus (95), who is a scholar of modernism.

4 In this sense, finding connections between *Saturday* and Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), another representative modernist novel, by some critics is not necessarily inappropriate. The circularity of the story is ordinarily regarded as the

connection between two works. In this respect, Patricia Waugh points out that “*Saturday* ends with the last line of Joyce’s ‘The dead’” (79). In relation to *Ulysses*, in terms of name, a character of Amsterdam, Molly Lane, who had sexual intercourse with more than one person, seems to be based on Molly Bloom.

5 Only Martin Ryle notices this intertextuality. However, he just gives a description of it in a footnote. According to Richard Brown, in terms of analogy to an existent poet’s name, Baxter is correspondent with James K. Baxter (1926–1972), who is a well-known New Zealand poet and Perowne is correspondent with Victor Tait Perowne (1897 – 1951). Brown states “Perowne’s blind spot would also, presumably, prevent him from being aware of the fact that he has his own poetic namesake in the minor and largely forgotten early twentieth-century poet” (90-91). In relation to Perowne’s name, Lynn Wells points out “Perowne likes to imagine himself as being like” Saddam, “surveying the crowd with satisfaction from some Bagdad ministry balcony” and suggests that “layer of complexity in the Perowne-as-Saddam comparison lies in the character’s historical namesake, the diplomat Stewart Henry Perowne, who was stationed in the Middle East during and after the Second War, helping to solidify British imperial interests in the region” (116).

6 In the sense that the relationship between McEwan and D.H. Lawrence is explored, it can be said that the female protagonist of *On Chesil Beach* named Florence resembles D. H. Lawrence in phoneme. Besides, *On Chesil Beach* is set in the year 1962, which is one year before when the ban on republishing Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) was removed, and, in this work, Florence is described as a person who, in the contrast to stereotype of Lady Chatterley, abhors sexual touch and sexual intercourse.

7 In this context, it can be said that the family name of the Perownes means *Per-own(e)*, which can be interpreted as individualist self-help, the concept of neoliberalism.

Works Cited

- Amiel-Houser, Tammy. "Otherness in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." *Connotations*. 21.1 (2011): 128-157.
- Bradley, Arthur. "The New Atheist Novel: Literature, Religion, and Terror in Amis and McEwan." *The Yearbook of English Studies*. 39.1/2 (2009): 20-38.
- Brown, Richard. "Politics, the Domestic and the Uncanny Effect of the Everyday in *Saturday*." *Critical Survey*. 20.1 (2008): 80-93.
- Carpenter, Rebecca. "We're Not a Friggin' Girl Band: September 11, Masculinity, and the British-America Relationship in David Here's *Stuff Happens* and Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." *Literature after 9/11*. Ed. Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.
- Childs, Peter. *The Fiction of Ian McEwan*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005. Print.
- Eaglestone, Robert. "'The age of reason was over ... an age of fury was dawning': Contemporary Fiction and Terror." *Terror and the Postcolonial*. Ed. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Motron. Oxford: Blackwell, 2009. Print.
- . *Contemporary Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.
- Hirota, Sonoko. "'On Being Ill': Woolf, Darwin, and the Diseased

- Mind in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." *Virginia Woolf Review* 33(2013): 61-78. Print.
- Lynn, David. "A Conversation with Ian McEwan." *Kenyon Review* 29.3 (2007): 38-51.
- Lynn, Wells. *Ian McEwan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
- Marcus, Laura. "Ian McEwan's Modernist Time: *Atonement* and *Saturday*." *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Ed. Sebastian Groes. London: Continuum, 2009. 83-98.
- McEwan, Ian. "Master of the Universe." *The New York Times* 7 April.2005. 2 December 2013.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/07/opinion/07mcewan.html>>.
- . "Only Love and Then Oblivion. Love Was All They Had to Set against Their Murderers." *The Guardian*, 15 Sept.2001. 2 Sept.2013.
<<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/15/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety2>>.
- . *Saturday*. London: Vintage. 2005. Print.
- Ross, Michael. L. "On a darkling Planet: Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and the Condition of England." *Twentieth Century Literature* 54.1 (2008): 75-96.
- Ryle, Martin. "Anosognosia, or the Political Unconscious: Limits of Vision in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." *Criticism* 52.1 (2010):

25-40.

Takeda, Masaaki. "Deguchi no Nai Sekai: Ian McEwan no Jikan Kankaku" ["The World without Way Out: The Sense of Temporality in Ian McEwan's Works"]. *Eigo Seinen* [*The Rising Generation*], 154(8), 2008: 14-16. Print.

Waugh, Patricia. "Thinking in Literature: Modernism and Contemporary Neuroscience." *The Legacies of Modernism*. Ed. David James. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print.